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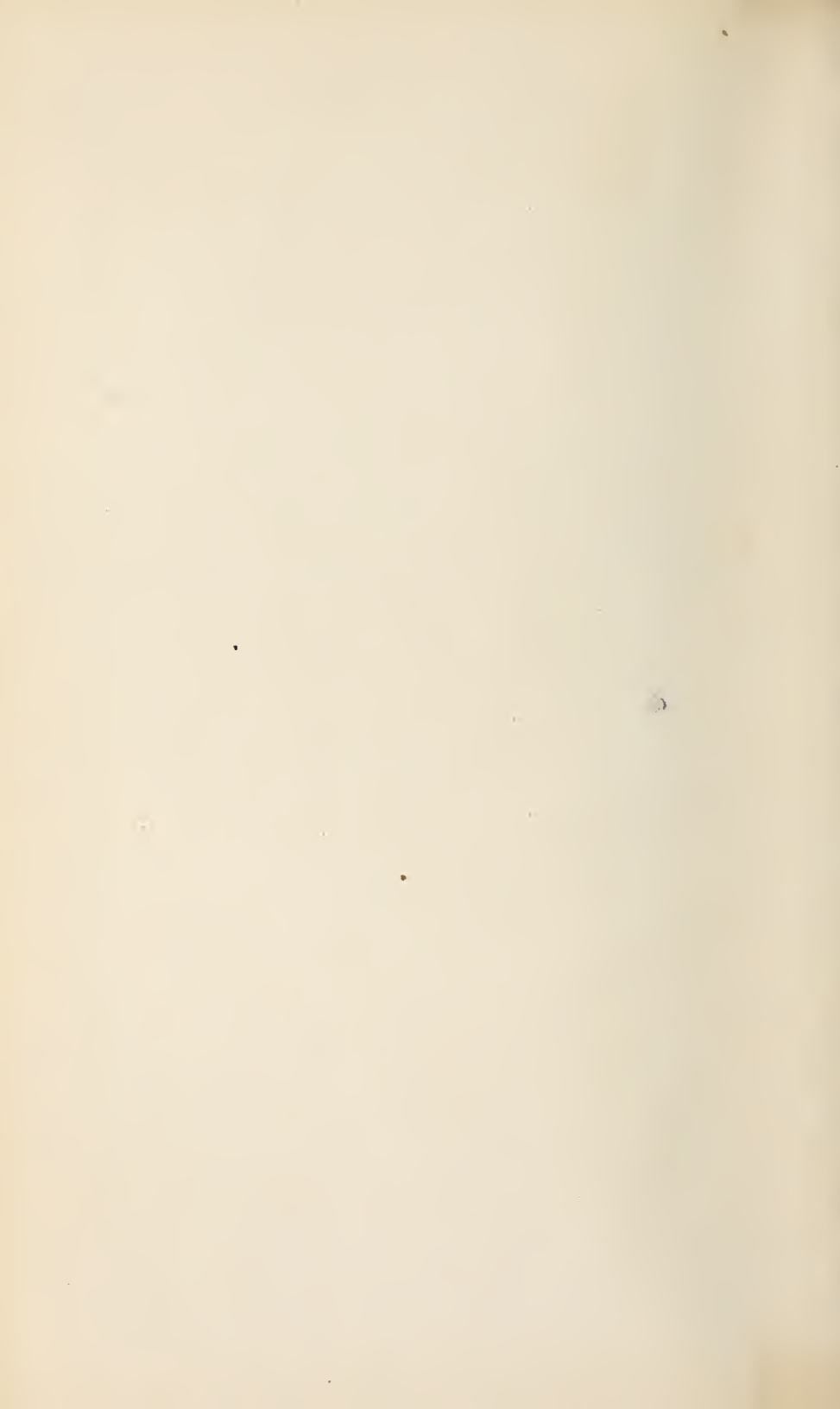
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









A FIFTY-YEARS MINISTRY.

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# TWO DISCOURSES

ON

*The Fiftieth Anniversary*

OF

THE AUTHOR'S ORDINATION,

MARCH 15th, 1815.

DELIVERED IN

MIDDLEBOROUGH, MASS., ON SABBATH, MARCH 19, 1865,

BY

ISRAEL W. PUTNAM,

TWENTY YEARS PASTOR OF FIRST CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH, N. H.,

AND

THIRTY YEARS PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH, MIDDLEBORO', MASS.

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Published by Request of his People.

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## MORNING DISCOURSE.

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I TIMOTHY, 1 : 12.—“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”

Such were the views of the great Apostle respecting the Christian ministry, in which he had laboriously and faithfully served his Lord and Savior many long years,—even from the time of his wonderful conversion. I trust, my hearers, you will consider these words of Paul as furnishing this day a suitable theme for him, who now addresses you and takes occasion to say, that ‘he was put into the same ministry’ fifty years ago, the 15th day of the present month.

Grateful ought every minister of Christ Jesus to be for the privilege of laboring in this holy work, *even for the shortest period*; and when any one is continued in it for the term of *Fifty Years*, he may well “call upon his soul and all that is within him” to bless the forbearance of his compassionate Lord and Savior.

But it is a very solemn thing for a minister of Christ to think of giving an account of his stewardship *even to his fellow mortals* for so long a period as the one we are now reviewing.

The wheels of time, my friends, have borne us along the distance of more than 18,000 days since I was first consecrated to the ministerial work; and, during that term, there have occurred over 2600 Sabbaths, when I ought faithfully to have preached the Gospel of Christ to my perishing fellow men, ‘whether they would hear or forbear.’ We see how *Paul* felt in view of the service *he* had performed, as a minister of the gospel. He could say, that his Lord had counted him “faithful” in that service. But who of us now in the ministry can say the same? And yet the words of Paul, taken in connection with the subject, are well calculated to direct our medita-

tions on this anniversary occasion. They are full of interest to the preacher and God can make them profitable to those, who are now assembled to hear him.

Let me, therefore, repeat the words of that faithful minister of the Lord Jesus, which he uttered near the close of his earthly service; "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

These words of the apostle present us with three views of the Christian ministry:

I. The object and duties of that sacred office;

II. The source, to which a minister of Christ must look for help, if he would be found faithful;

III. The gratitude he owes his Savior for sustaining him in his labors.

These different views of the subject, I am aware, look at first rather more to the *ordination* of a minister of the gospel than to his *close* of that work; but they seem to be seasonable to the occasion of this day; for I wish to refresh your memories, my friends, with those views of God's word, which I have endeavored to teach during my whole ministry; and they naturally arise from the words of the apostle, as he was looking back upon the long work he had performed from that memorable hour when he was arrested in his course of persecuting the followers of Jesus, and was constrained to cry out in the anguish of his soul, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Paul, when he wrote to Timothy the words of my text, was turning his thoughts back upon the labors, the travels and the persecutions through which he had passed, while prosecuting that self denying work, which he had come so ardently to love. It was in this retrospective view of what he had personally experienced of the grace of that gospel, which he had preached and for which he had suffered so much, that his heart was lifted up in thanksgiving and praise to his adorable Savior for having *enabled* him to labor so long in the holy ministry, and also for the hope he cherished, that he had been *faithful in it*.

I am aware, that the several views, which I have proposed to take of the subject, might open the way for discussions, that would occupy

far more time than can this morning be given to them. I shall be somewhat brief on each of these topics, for I shall, in the afternoon, have occasion to notice, in a familiar way, many things of a local and historical kind, which have occurred in the twenty years of my ministry in Portsmouth, and in the longer one of nearly thirty years in this place.

I. We are to take a brief view of the object and duties of the Christian Ministry.

Here I might say *in a word*, that it is the bringing back into loyal obedience to the everlasting and glorious Jehovah, of the millions of our sinful world, who have rebelled against his holy authority.

We live, my hearers, in a part of God's universal empire, which has revolted against his holy and righteous government. Our first parents were created in the divine image, holy and happy. But they early *lost* that image by sinning against their Maker; and their posterity have all inherited *their sinful nature*: God hath himself declared, that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." Our race have in all ages shown a spirit of alienation from God. Not only have all become guilty of transgressing his law, but they have a sinful, alienated mind, which inclines them to constant disobedience; so that, if left to ourselves, we are all exposed to the fearful displeasure of God in this life, to condemnation in the day of judgment and to final and eternal banishment from Heaven—forever to dwell with the enemies of the great and eternal Jehovah.

But God did not leave our world in this perishing condition. In the exercise of the glorious attribute of Mercy he has devised a way, in which the transgressors of his law can be pardoned and be made holy and happy forever in his Heavenly Kingdom. For this glorious object he has given Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, to die for the pardon of sinners and his gracious Spirit to renew and sanctify their souls, that they might be prepared to dwell in his holy kingdom above.

The way, by which God has made known his willingness thus to pardon, to sanctify and to save a sinful world, is *through the christian ministry*. Jesus Christ himself, just before he left the world, appointed some of his followers, giving them authority to appoint others, who should all go forth, age after age, and preach the gospel to every creature, saying, "he, that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he, that believeth not, shall be damned."

Thus was instituted the Christian ministry, into which our Savior has already put hundreds and thousands of his servants and into which he will continue to put others *even till the world shall end*. They have gone forth ever since Christ ascended to heaven, saying to the children of men, as Paul said to the Corinthians, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Yes, my hearers, the ministers of the Lord Jesus go forth now, as they have always done in every age of the Christian Dispensation, to declare to their fellow sinners the glorious truth, that pardon and eternal life are offered them through the atoning blood of Him who died on Calvary, and that the Holy Spirit has come into our world according to the promise of Jesus to receive the things of Christ and show them unto men.

The true ministers of the gospel, teach the great doctrine of Regeneration as it was taught by Jesus himself, telling those who hear them, that they 'must be born again or never see the kingdom of God'; they inculcate the necessity of repentance of sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: and while they teach these great fundamental doctrines of the gospel, they exhort believers to live in practical obedience to christian duties, 'giving all diligence to add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.' The ministers of Christ inculcate the great duty of prayer, a due observance of the Holy Sabbath and the special ordinances of the gospel, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They visit the sick and dying, directing their eyes to "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." They are persevering in their labors *if faithful*, remembering the earnest exhortation of Paul to Timothy to 'preach the word, to be instant in season, out of season, to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.'

Thus, my hearers I have just hinted at the various duties and labors of christian ministers—duties and labors, which I felt would be required of me when I was set apart to the same work; for what was required of them in the times of the apostles, who were instructed by



Christ himself, is required of their successors in this age of the world. They go forth now, if they have the right spirit, as did the early ministers of Jesus, to be continued in his service just as long as he shall appoint,—some for a short time, others for a ten or twenty or fifty years, not counting their life dear to them if they “may win Christ and be found in him,” as instruments of saving souls from eternal death.

Do you wonder then, my hearers, that the apostle, at the close of his earthly labors, should have thanked Christ Jesus, his Lord, for putting him in to such a ministry? No; you cannot wonder, for he loved that service with all its trials and all its sufferings: and he could give thanks that he was allowed to imitate his Saviour, who while here in the flesh willingly ‘endured the contradiction of sinners against himself,’ if he might thereby save their souls.

Let us now turn to another view of the subject.

II. The source, to which every minister of the gospel must look for help, if he would be found faithful.

The condescension of God in using mortal, sinful men in accomplishing his holy and merciful design of saving millions of our apostate world, *is wonderful indeed!* JESUS might have continued in the flesh himself and, through every generation of our race, have manifested the same power for the conversion and salvation of men, which ever attended his words during his short ministry of three years; or, when he ascended up on high, he might have commissioned some of the “ministering spirits,” who belonged to the Angelic Hosts to take up the work he left here on earth. But such was not the divine purpose respecting the salvation of men.

The gospel, which is “the power of God,” was to be preached by a succession of those very mortal, sinful men, who need its saving grace for their own souls; and in this way has this glorious dispensation of God’s truth been made known in our world ever since the ascension of the risen Savior. His own disciples, whom he had so long instructed in the things of his kingdom, proceeded at once, after his ascension to heaven, to the work appointed them. Frail, imperfect, mortal men they were; but they remembered his gracious promise; for when he commanded them to go and preach the gospel to every creature, he added this most animating and encouraging word—“Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.” That word

of promise was sufficient to sustain them in all the labors and trials that were before them : and what was experienced by the primitive disciples as they went forth to their appointed work, was realized in the same way by others, who followed them.

The great apostle to the Gentiles found in that same word of promise the strength he needed for his arduous work. Hence it was that he wrote as he did to Timothy, acknowledging, that it was the Lord Jesus who had "enabled him to preach the gospel in many places and many countries, where he was opposed not only by individual men, who hated the 'truth as it is in Jesus,' but also by 'principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world, who were in alliance with spiritual wickedness in high places.'

Now, my hearers, the experience of God's gracious help by those, who preached the gospel in the first ages of the christian dispensation, is in its real nature just what is needed and what is felt by every faithful minister of Christ at the present day. We, who now preach the same gospel, have no power of our own by which we can be sustained in the work. Its labors, its trials we cannot endure for a single day or a single hour by any resources within ourselves. No ; whenever we have been borne up under these crushing responsibilities, it is because the Lord hath *enabled* us to bear them.

Although in this age of the world and especially in a land of religious freedom like our own, a christian minister is not called to encounter such trials as Paul told the Ephesians and Corinthians, had been appointed to him, yet 'the offence of the cross is not ceased.' The preaching of the pure gospel of Christ and a faithful discharge of its incumbent duties make the office of a minister very laborious and self-denying even now, and often constrain him to cry unto his Lord and Savior for grace to enable him to be faithful in his work. Without the strength he thus obtains he would often sink under the weights, which oppress him. Oh ! my hearers, how powerless is the minister of the gospel, who looks not to the Holy Spirit for light to know his duty and who leans not on his adorable Savior for strength to perform it.

The truth of all this any one may see, who will look at the *fearful responsibilities* of those who are employed in this holy work — Hear how the Apostle speaks on the subject to the Corinthian believers, "we are unto God," says he "a sweet savor of Christ in them

that are saved and in them that perish : to the one we are a savor of death unto death ; and to the other a savor of life unto life, and *who is sufficient for these things?*" You see how deeply he felt the need of divine help ; for he knew, that the life or death of souls was greatly suspended on the manner in which he dispensed the gospel in their hearing : and what was true respecting the preaching of the apostles is equally true of the ministers of the gospel at the present time. Paul himself needed the special assisting grace of his Savior in every daily labor he performed as much as in the glorious epistles he wrote to the churches of that age, or in the fearful persecutions he endured : and it is well for us, if we, who are, at this age of the world preaching the same everlasting gospel, can trust in the enabling strength of Him, who hath put us into the same ministry.

This brings us to the third view of our subject.

III. The special gratitude, which a minister of Christ owes his Savior for sustaining him in this great work during the term of *fifty years*.

If any servant of the Lord Jesus has, by the gracious help given him, been comparatively faithful in his master's service for so long a period, he will be grateful on many accounts.

1. For being *thus spared and continued* in such a blessed service.

Fifty years is much beyond the average length of human life in this part of the world ; and for any one to be allowed to spend so long a period in winning souls to Christ calls for the expression of thankfulness and praise. The average age of *ministerial* life would probably be but little more than half of the term we are contemplating. How many fall in the conflict short of the period of twenty years ; and how many scarcely get the gospel armor on, before they are admonished, that they are no longer needed in this holy service.

2. Ministers of the gospel, who are spared so long, ought to be grateful for the *health and strength* given them to meet the labors and trials of their calling.

We have already had occasion to see how severe and oppressive these labors and trials are. Many sink under the weight of them at an early period. Let any one then, who has had from above the physical powers to keep on so many years in his master's service, gratefully remember, that he has not been left to sink under its toils and go down to an early grave.

3. A minister of Christ, whose life is thus lengthened out, ought to be thankful for light given him to know what labors his Lord requires of him and where those labors are to be performed.

When a disciple of Jesus, at the proper age, feels a desire to enter the ministerial work and has in God's providence and by the grace of his Spirit the requisite qualifications, his first inquiry will be, 'what the Lord would have him to do?' And, if at the end of a long ministry he has good reason to believe, that he has not wandered from the path of duty, but, that from time to time, he listened to his Master's voice and actually went to just such parts of the gospel vineyard as were appointed unto him for labor, and that he there toiled patiently to the end of his laboring days,—he will have occasion, in his old age, to render thanks to his gracious Lord for directing his ways and for keeping him in the right place of service.

4. A faithful and godly minister, when he comes to the close of a long service, will have occasion to thank and praise his Savior for the grace he has received to keep him under the influence of *truly christian motives* in his work.

Who does not know the danger there is from the sinfulness of the human heart, that ministers of the gospel, as well as other men, may act under the influence of motives that will not bear the light of the great revealing day? "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" said the prophet Jeremiah. Every conscientious minister of Christ trembles for himself, when he calls to mind his own liability in this respect. He knows that he ought to aim at the divine glory in every part of his work; and when he feels the danger there is, that he may labor even for the conversion of sinners and for the prosperity of the church of Christ under the influence of low, worldly and selfish motives, he will pray as did the Psalmist, saying, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." Such a man, having been kept by the grace of God and having been led constantly to seek *his* good pleasure will, at the close of a long ministry, have occasion to thank and praise his Savior for having enabled him so to live and so to labor, that he can cherish the hope of having something of "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man."

5. I remark once more that such a minister will have occasion to



thank and praise his Savior, if he has good reason to believe that his humble labors have been crowned with any degree of success in the conversion and salvation of souls.

He never wishes to lose sight of the affecting truth that 'although Paul may plant and Apollos water, it is God only who gives the increase.' If he has been governed by right motives in so long a ministerial service, he will deeply feel that all the power, which has made it effectual, even in a single instance, *comes from God*. He may have labored faithfully, he may have preached the word earnestly and even eloquently; he may have toiled "in season and out of season," yet he knows that all the power, which converts a single sinner or which advances a single believer in holiness of life and in preparation for the heavenly world, *is of God*,—that he himself is only an instrument in his Savior's hand and that to Him is due all the praise and all the glory of any success that has attended his labors. Thus he will gratefully and joyfully adopt the language of the devout Psalmist, in an adapted form, saying, 'Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy name be all the glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.'

And shall not the ministers of Christ Jesus in every age of the world be *thankful* to Him for 'putting them into the ministry,' however arduous and self-denying its labors? Ought not your own pastor, my friends, to give thanks to his Lord and Savior, that fifty years ago he caused him to be set apart to the same holy service?

I have now endeavored to exhibit a brief view of the character and services of a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. We have looked at the object and duties of his office; we have considered the source to which he must look for help in his work; we have dwelt a little upon the reflections he will make at the close of his ministry.

But in all I have now said you can easily see, my hearers, that I have experienced a constant difficulty, lest you should think I was aiming at a description of *my own case*, and that I was striving to show that *I* had so labored in the service of the Lord Jesus, that like the apostle I could have some claim to the divine favor. But I shrink from such a thought: and yet, if there has been anything in all the years of my ministry, which in the least resembles that of the heavenly-minded and laborious apostle, I would devoutly attribute it wholly to the special grace of Him, who I humbly trust condescended to call me

into the ministerial service at the beginning of the period which we are this day reviewing.

I confess I have found the Christian ministry an *arduous* service ; for its duties and labors have had to be performed often when the flesh was weak. But, at the same time, it is a service in which, if I do not deceive myself, I have had great enjoyment. Often during these years have I cherished the animating hope, that the Savior was with me, when I was pleading with my fellow-sinners to become reconciled to God,—and when, also, I was exhorting the beloved members of the Churches, to which I have ministered, to live such a holy and self-denying life as they knew their Savior lived, while he was in the flesh. If at such times I ever saw a Christian or a sinner yielding to my entreaties, I could not fail to acknowledge that it was *the power of God*, that produced such an effect ; for often have my most earnest pleadings been *ineffectual* with both these classes of my hearers, simply because a sovereign God did not see fit to accompany what I said with the gracious influences of his Spirit.

You will not think it strange, my friends, that, standing as I now do at the close of a fifty-years service, I should be much affected with the thought that all this labor should have accomplished so little toward the salvation of my fellow men. Oh ! had I, all this time, been more earnest in my work, more fully unfolding the glorious provisions of the gospel for the salvation of those, who have heard me ; had I more clearly pointed out to them the consequences of accepting or of rejecting Christ Jesus as a Savior, it may be that I should have seen, as a result of it all, greater numbers than I can now look upon as the fruits of my labors. But even then it would all have been of *God's Sovereign grace*, for without the accompanying power of his Spirit, the most earnest and the most eloquent minister of Christ will always preach in vain.

Still, I cannot help calling to mind the hundreds and the thousands, who in all these years have heard me as 'an ambassador of Christ,' 'praying them in his stead to become reconciled to God.' Some of them are already gone to give up their account ; others are still enjoying a day of grace. But *all the number I must meet* in the great and final day. Think you not, my hearers, that it will fill my soul with rejoicing, if it shall then appear that *I was instrumental* of preparing for the world of glory any number of my beloved charge

here, or of my former beloved one in a distant city? *That other thought—the painful one*—of then meeting any, who should have rejected the Savior I preached in their hearing,—*that thought*, I say, I would not dwell upon this day. It shall be my prayer to the close of my mortal life, that not *one* of all who have heard the gospel message from my lips, shall then be found without a title to a place in the Heavenly Kingdom.

I now close a consideration of the subject for the morning, asking your prayers, my friends, that when it is resumed in the afternoon I may be divinely directed and aided in presenting such personal, historical and statistical incidents respecting the whole fifty years of my ministry, as by the blessing of God may be profitable to us all and acceptable in the sight of Him, who allows us during all our earthly life to enjoy the privileges of a Preached Gospel. Amen.

## AFTERNOON DISCOURSE.

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I TIMOTHY, 1 : 12.—“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”

These words of Paul to Timothy, his younger fellow-laborer in the Christian ministry, seem to present a train of thought well adapted to the occasion we are noticing this day. The several views of the Christian ministry, which engaged our attention in the morning while meditating on the text, were as follows :

- I. The object and duties of the Christian Ministry ;
- II. The source, to which a minister of Christ must look for help, if he would be found faithful in his work ;
- III. The gratitude he owes his Savior for sustaining him in it.

In dwelling upon these three views of the subject, I trust, my hearers, you saw their appropriateness to the occasion. Your Pastor has now been spared and continued in the ministerial service *fifty years*, and you have been expecting that he would more or less publicly take some notice of the Anniversary.

He ought himself to have adoring views of the patience and loving kindness of his Heavenly Master in allowing him to be employed in such a grateful and responsible service for so long a time. You are yourselves aware of the reflections growing out of the occasion, which he feels constrained to make. He confesses, that they have been somewhat personal,—and he could not avoid it. He now appeals to your kindness and patience, for he knows, that as he proceeds, you will find him *still more personal*. But bear in mind that, during all these fifty years he has been preaching *to others* : let him then, on *this* part of the day preach particularly *to himself* ; even though what he shall say be little more than a brief history of God’s dealings with him from his earliest life to the time of his ordination, and a hasty review of



that measure of the Divine blessing, which he trusts has attended his ministerial services. Possibly such an occupation of your thoughts this afternoon may be profitable even to the youth and children of this people, who will long retain in their memories some knowledge of the life and services of their aged minister.

Yes, my friends, bear with him while he shall go back to his childhood and youth, and while he shall see himself subsequently entering upon the arduous labors of the ministry,—thus living over again the last fifty years of his life. I know it will be trying to your patience, for so vivid to my own mind are the scenes of my life, and especially those of my ministry, as I have just been called to review them for the present occasion, that *I have been tedious even to myself*: much more so, then, must I expect to be tedious to *my hearers*, who cannot dwell upon the incidents of another's life as they can upon those of their own.

This Fiftieth anniversary, you see, is attended with *no public demonstration*. I am glad it is so; I have chosen this holy, quiet Sabbath for its observance and not the Wednesday of last week, which was the exact time. It is far from my design during this hour to dwell upon the history, even the *religious* history, of the world or of our own country during the past fifty years. I shall confine myself to what is local and personal in this and in my former field of labor.

Your pastor, my friends, feels himself *here at home*;—among his *own beloved people*,—hardly aware that he has any hearers, who do not belong to the number of his pastoral charge. He prays and trusts that he shall utter nothing unworthy of the house of God, or in any way disparaging to the Christian Ministry, while he may dwell particularly on the dealings of his Heavenly Father with himself.

I would, therefore, proceed to say that I was born 78 years ago, on the 24th day of last November. My parents were professors of the religion of the gospel, and of our Congregational order. They attached the highest importance to that 'Everlasting Covenant of promise, which God made with Abraham, to be a covenant with him and his seed forever,'—and, believing, as they might well do, that, under the *Christian* Dispensation, Baptism takes the place of Circumcision as a seal of the Covenant, they devoted their infant children to God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, by giving them

up to him in this sacred ordinance. Such was their dealing with *myself*—my honored father carrying me, when I was only two days old, the distance of nearly three miles, in cold November, and giving me up to God in Baptism, administered by Rev. Benjamin Wadsworth, my native Pastor ; and to the end of my mortal days would I be grateful for that parental, believing service. What influence it had on my subsequent life, or what connection it may have with my final salvation, Eternity alone will disclose. Of this I am sure—it operated powerfully *on my parents*, inducing them to train me up according to the gracious provisions of that holy covenant, in which they had thus consecrated me to God. It had also an influence on *myself*, for I could not forget that I had been devoted to my Maker, and that I must not break his covenant, whose seal had been placed upon me.

These remarks on Infant Baptism I am induced to offer for the encouragement of believing parents in this church, to make an early consecration of their children to God in the holy ordinance of Baptism. Indeed, I have been pained to observe what a growing remissness there has been of late years in our churches to avail themselves of the extensive privileges of God's gracious covenant with believers and their children.

In all the early religious instruction, which I received from my parents, God's word was of supreme authority ; and next to that came the Assembly's Catechism, whose truths with constant prayer were inculcated on my youthful mind. These Christian dealings of my parents with me made a strong and lasting impression on my youthful mind. They led me to study my Bible and to pray to my Heavenly Father ; yet it was many years before I felt that I had *bowed at the Cross of Christ and given my heart to God*. When, at last, under the faithful ministry of my beloved Pastor, the late Rev. Dr. Worcester of Salem, where I then resided, I came to cherish a humble hope that *this first duty was done*, I made a public profession of Christ, and united with the church in Danvers, my native town.

I was then pursuing a course of study preparatory to practice in the Legal Profession. But when, in the year 1812, I saw our first American Missionaries ordained for the gospel ministry, consecrating themselves to the great and self-denying work of preaching the gos-

pel ministry, consecrating themselves to the great and self denying work of preaching the Gospel of Christ in Heathen Lands, my attention was powerfully arrested; and the question pressed itself on my conscience, why I should not spend *my* life in preaching the same Gospel to my sinful fellow men wherever God should appoint? After mature and prayerful consideration of the subject and in accordance with the counsel of Christian men, whom I respected, I came to the joyful conclusion, that such was my duty, and cheerfully and gladly did I leave all my hopes and prospects in that other honorable profession of life, for which I had spent years of time and incurred much expense,—that I might then prepare for the work of the holy ministry.

After completing a course of Theological study at the seminary in Andover, under those venerable men, Professors Porter, Woods and Stuart, I was, in June, 1814, licensed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. My first labors were at Gloucester, where our beloved brother Thacher is now laboring. After spending a few weeks there, I went by invitation to Portsmouth, N. H., and preached four Sabbaths, and then received a call from the First Church and Society in that place to settle with them in the the Christian ministry.

There, my friends, followed the greatest struggle of my life, for it was difficult to know the path of duty. The church there was small, yet unanimous and urgent in their invitation for me to settle with them. But the parish was in a divided state,—one portion friendly to Evangelical preaching, the other, and a *powerful* one, firmly and intelligently opposed to it.

The truth is,—the great crisis for Christian Doctrine in the Congregational Churches of New England had then come. Some of you, my hearers, (tho' the number is small) can recollect *what that crisis was*. For a long time previous to 1815 there had been in our churches a gradual and imperceptible falling away from those doctrines of faith, which had been held and inculcated by all the Primitive Fathers in the ministry. I refer here to such doctrines as a Trinity of persons in the Godhead; the Entire Native Sinfulness of the human heart; Regeneration by the Holy Spirit; Election by the sovereign purpose of God; Justification by the righteousness of Christ; and other doctrines intimately connected with these. The new views of Christian doctrine which began to prevail in our New England

Congregational Churches, fifty years ago, were not then called *Unitarianism*, but *Liberal Christianity*. This change was realized in *Portsmouth*. Much of it was felt in the First Parish there, and it was the occasion of the dissent in giving me a united call to settle with them in November, 1814. I saw the *nature of the opposition*; and a view of it was very disheartening. Still, I finally yielded to the counsel of the Fathers of that day and gave an affirmative answer to the call. But when the day appointed for my ordination came, March 15th, 1815, and the council had convened, a remonstrance against my settlement was presented to that body, signed by a larger number of parishioners than ever voted for me. The committee of the remonstrants argued powerfully and eloquently through much of the day against the ordination of the candidate, though they treated him personally with entire respect. The ground of their argument was the difference of doctrinal belief between the candidate and what they alleged to be a majority of the parish.

The question then arose in the council, what should be done? They perceived that at a legal meeting of the parish a regular call had been given to the candidate. They knew the history of that church and people, during the three years that followed the death of their last minister, Rev. Dr. Buckminster, who, for more than thirty years had been a preacher of strictly Evangelical doctrine, and believing that there was no hope of more union in the parish, the council decided, with the consent of the candidate, to proceed to his ordination, so that an experiment might be made on the question, whether God would not yet bless that ministration of his truth, which had been so faithfully addressed to that church and people by all the preceding ministers, who had been over them in the Gospel.

You see, my friends, the trying position in which I was placed. I was then a young man and with no experience in the Christian ministry. You will not wonder that I trembled at the thought of beginning that arduous work with such a fearful opposition. But I yielded to the advice of the Council which contained such wise and venerable men as Rev. Drs. Wadsworth, Spring, Porter, Dana and Worcester; and in doing this I was yielding also to the earnest wishes of the church and a fair proportion of the parish. The ordination services commenced at so late an hour of the day, that lights had to be brought



in to close them in the evening. The Rev. Dr. Porter preached the sermon from those words of Paul, where, in view of the greatness of the ministerial work, he exclaimed. "And who is sufficient for these things?" Many encouraging words did the preacher utter for the candidate. But when the hands of those Fathers in the ministry came to be placed on my unworthy head, sealing me with consecrating prayer to the arduous work of the ministry in such trying circumstances, you will not wonder that I was almost overwhelmed under a sense of such solemn responsibilities; and yet I thought I could humbly trust with the apostle, in the spirit of my text this day, that Christ Jesus, our Lord, *would enable* me to meet all the labors, cares and trials which were before me.

I would only add here, that, while some of the remonstrants against my ordination at once withdrew from the parish, yet others remained and heard me respectfully and kindly, some of this number afterwards becoming hopeful subjects of grace and uniting with the church.

You know, my friends, that the time of my ministry in Portsmouth was just *twenty years*. I will here briefly relate the principal incidents of that portion of my ministerial life.

After my settlement I found myself at once sustained by the kind attentions, earnest prayers and co-operating services of the church, which contained such devout christian men as the late Gov. Langdon, Deacons Tappan and Harris, and others of a like devoted spirit. Nor were there wanting many "Women to labor with me in the Gospel"; women of prayer and devout life, whose memories are precious, nearly all of them having already "died in the Lord."

In my pastoral intercourse with the people I early discovered a serious mind in a small number of the congregation. This led me to establish a weekly Inquiry Meeting at the parsonage house, which I sustained and regularly attended eighteen out of the twenty years of my ministry there. At that meeting, even when we had no revival, I had opportunity to converse freely on personal religion with a smaller or greater number of inquirers; and here I might remark, that a very large proportion of the 301 who entered the church, during my ministry in Portsmouth, went in through that Inquiry Meeting. Other weekly and monthly meetings, and a quarterly one for the church, were also sustained. Our sacramental communion was monthly and

was always preceded by a Preparatory Lecture in the meeting house. One way of instructing the children and youth in divine things during my ministry was by meeting them monthly for learning and repeating the Assembly's Catechism ; and this, I think, was instrumental of imparting to their minds just views of Christian Truth.

A Sabbath School was established and continued in the Parish soon after that religious enterprise was begun in this country. I would here say also that I think I was much sustained in my labors by Female Prayer Meetings and the Maternal Association which were attended by sisters of the church.

I have one remark to make here, which applies to all the religious meetings and christian efforts of the church under my ministry in Portsmouth. It is this : The people there lived near the Parsonage house, the Vestry and the Meeting House,—so that they could easily give their attendance. I found it different when I came here, where most of the families are living far from the Parsonage and the center of the Parish, which renders it difficult for them to convene for christian privileges and for mutual encouragement in the service of God.

During the first twelve years of my ministry in Portsmouth, there were constant hopeful conversions and additions to the church,—upon an average of eight or nine members annually.

In 1826 it pleased a sovereign God to pour out his Spirit gloriously upon the people of my charge, and we had a season of Revival, which continued for more than fifteen months, and which brought more than *seventy* into the church. Those were days and months never to be forgotten by the pastor and his people. At one of our Inquiring Meetings at the Parsonage house there were present the number of 135 in the *two largest* rooms, while in *another* and at the same hour the church were holding their weekly meeting of Prayer that God would continue the convicting and converting influences of his Spirit. Ah ! my friends, the church were *awake* then. They had dear friends in the Inquiring Rooms whose minds were full of agony, asking what they should do to be saved ? and christians were then willing to pray and labor that souls might be saved and not lost. When the Parsonage house became incapable of holding the Inquirers and the church, we removed both meetings to a Public Building that had two very large rooms, one for the Inquirers and one for the Church. There our meet-

ings were continued weekly till the Revival came to a close. There the neighboring ministers would come and help me. There my beloved brother, Rev. Jonathan French, who preached my Installation sermon here thirty years ago, would come eight miles and work two or three hours in our evening meetings and then go home at a late hour of the night: I love to think of him now in the Heavenly World, rejoicing over all the sacrifices he then made for the salvation of souls and for the glory of that Savior, whom he lived to love and serve till he was near the close of his four score years.

This Revival put a new aspect upon our church and congregation. Our Sabbaths, especially communion occasions, were seasons of deep spiritual interest, and of high christian enjoyment. So much was our number increased in the church and in the congregation, that, by the advice of ministers and other christian friends, we undertook the great work of setting off an important part of our members for what was called a Colony church. A fine house of worship for them was built and paid for. But a mistake was committed in placing the Colony in an unfavorable part of the city and not where the population was increasing; so that, after a few years of unsuccessful effort, the enterprise had to be abandoned for the reunion of the Colony church, with the Old one; and it was to facilitate that object, that I was led to believe it was my duty to resign my pastoral charge. At my request a Council was called for that object. But so strongly did the Church and the people remonstrate against it, that the Council decided I ought to remain; and I proceeded in my ministerial labors with them another year. But I then became more fully convinced of the desirableness of the reunion of the churches. Accordingly, upon consultation with the pastor of the Colony church we both resolved on giving up our respective charges; and our request for that purpose was made to our several congregations on the same day. The result was the desired Reunion,—a result which God has smiled upon, as is apparent from the subsequent prosperity of the beloved old church, of which I was pastor.

I ought in this connection to have stated that during the last two years of my pastorate in Portsmouth the Lord blessed us with another Revival of his work, which brought the number of nearly thirty into the church.

Thus, my hearers, you see how it was that I left my first minis-

terial charge. The labors of my ministry there were arduous but delightful; for I had a humble assurance, that a divine blessing was attending them; and I would bear record now and forever, that it was because 'Christ Jesus our Lord enabled me,' that I was sustained under the toils of those twenty years.

After I was by an Ecclesiastical Council regularly dismissed from the Portsmouth church, I retained my home in that beloved place for the succeeding seven months, supplying my old pulpit most of the time by exchanges with the neighboring ministers,—but always with the question pressing itself on my mind, whether the Lord had any further service for me to perform, *as a stated pastor*, in some other part of the gospel vineyard? and it was, I trust, in answer to my own prayers and the prayers of my christian friends, that I was directed to this place now almost thirty years ago.

The circumstances of my coming here, were peculiarly Providential. I knew nothing of Middleborough, and this people knew nothing of me previously to that time. But it was God's purpose, as we now see, that I should spend a large part of my ministerial life here; and under his control were all the means, by which it was to be accomplished. Do you not love to trace the hand of God, my hearers, in all the changes and even in all the circumstances of your mortal life? Such an employment, I can assure you, has long been a source of enjoyment to my own mind.

Let me say then, that my name was first mentioned to the committee for supplying this pulpit by a person then residing in this neighborhood, and whom I had found as a young female member of the Portsmouth church twenty years before. In compliance with an invitation from that committee I came here on Saturday, 22d of August, 1835, having traveled in my own private conveyance 100 miles from home. Weary indeed I was by my long journey, but I met a kind reception at the house of the late Hon. Judge Wood, chairman of the committee, who directed me to this pleasant Green for accommodations during my stay in the place. The twilight hour of that Saturday evening I spent in looking at the scenes around me; and most imposing of all was the sight of this noble Sanctuary, which had then recently been built for God's holy service. I now well recollect, that, before I gave myself to the slumbers of that night, I sat down and made a memorandum in the following words: "Now, O my God;



look down upon me, whom thou has brought as 'a stranger to a strange place.' I seem to hear thee saying to me "what doest thou here?" and my reply to thee is,—'Lord, I hope I came in obedience to thy will. I desire to do my duty and leave all the consequences with thee. Eternity will show what those consequences are.'"

It was under the influence of thoughts and feelings like these that I came into this House on my first Sabbath. You can hardly imagine, my hearers, the sensation of my mind, when I first gazed upon the large assembly, which I saw before me; for although I had, on my way hither, heard something of the troubles, through which this people had recently passed by reason of division, respecting their former pastor, yet I came cherishing the highest respect for their christian and social character. The trial was great for me to come in at just such a crisis to preach the gospel of Christ and to be as it were, a messenger of Peace. But I was sustained by the thought, that He whom I hoped I had hitherto served, had led me to this place. My Discourse on the morning of that day was on "The Christian Race," and in the afternoon on "The worth of the soul." I had a large, attentive and serious audience. Ah! my friends,—how few of those, who heard me on that Sabbath thirty years ago, are my hearers this day!

On the Monday which followed I received many kind calls and invitations from the people and spent the week among them, and thus it was, that I went on preaching a 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sabbaths, spending the intervening days in social and religious intercourse among the families in their many different and distant neighborhoods.

Soon after I left this place I received, as some of you yet living know, a cordial invitation from the Church and Parish to settle over them in the ministerial work. Many letters have I now on my files from distinguished men in the church and congregation kindly urging me to give an affirmative answer. Such an answer, after prayerful consideration of the subject, I did give. The day of my Installation was agreed upon, and the 28th of the following October witnessed the assembling of the large Council, which consecrated me anew to the ministerial work and placed me over this beloved people as their Pastor and Teacher.

Can you realize it, my hearers, that it is almost thirty years since that solemn transaction? How many, who witnessed it are gone from

the scenes of time ! How many of the Fathers of that Council have passed away, changing their connection with the Church Militant for the more glorious one with the Church Triumphant ! Of the *ministers* now deceased, who were on that Council, the following names rush upon my memory, viz., Cobb, French, Codman, Dexter, Colby, Bigelow and Smalley ; an equal number, no doubt, of the Brethren, who were Delegates in that Council, have made the same glorious change. Oh ! let it be the great object of *our* life to prepare for joining them in the bliss and service of the Heavenly Kingdom.

When the transactions of the Installing Council were over and there had been a departure of the Ministers and Delegates and other friends, we all of us here found ourselves placed in new relations to one another. I had become pastor of the ancient church, which was formed here in 1694, O. S., after twenty years of Home Missionary labor performed by that devoted man, REV. SAMUEL FULLER,—who was then ordained as its first pastor, and only six months before he died. He was succeeded by six other pastors, among whose names those of Thatcher, Conant and Barker are familiar to you.

I felt, therefore, that I must lose no time in beginning my great work. But my beloved family were not then with me here, and I saw that my first duty was to accomplish their removal. This undertaking called forth the first kind and generous impulse of the people's heart toward their new minister ; and with their seasonable and efficient aid, the whole family were soon removed and comfortably placed in the Parsonage house.

The next thing for me to do was to look at the field of labor which was before me.

In this service I was kindly and efficiently aided by members of the church and friends in the Parish.

I knew that while preaching the gospel must be my *main work*, I must also be a pastor of the people. I therefore sought to know the extent of the territory which they occupied ; nor was I discouraged, though I confess I was often surprised to learn how large it was. The Meeting House stood here, as it does now on the old, Central, Pilgrim ground. But most of the families were dwelling far away in different directions. This was a trying, but not discouraging consideration to the pastor, who was then in the vigorous part of his

life. No, my friends; the call to go three, or four, or five miles to visit the sick, or to attend an evening religious meeting, or to conduct the services at a funeral or to make common pastoral visits, was little of a trial to me then. I loved to breathe the free country air, after having been confined twenty years to a city life. But I acknowledge, that such distant labors have been more trying in my advancing years,—a consideration, which has had much weight with me in thinking, that my ministry here ought ere long to come to a close.

But, in 1835, when I came here, and in the ten or twenty years which followed, I scarcely thought that my field of labor was large or arduous. So I hope it will seem to the ministerial brother, who shall follow me—especially at the commencement of his labors. And here arises a humbling and yet a comforting thought for me to dwell upon: “He must increase but I must decrease.”

But, to go back to the beginning of my ministry here,—as I have already said—while I felt that the *preaching of the gospel* in public and in private was the great work of a christian minister, I yet considered it my duty to encourage and sustain in my new pastorate, (so far as practicable) those different kinds of religious meetings for prayer, for mutual christian improvement, and for instructing the young, which I adopted at the commencement of my ministry in Portsmouth. But I soon found that I could not pursue the same course,—and particularly, that I must abandon my attempt to instruct the young from the Assembly’s Catechism. I had to do this on account of the distant location of the families, from which the youth must come. On the same account also I have found it difficult to have central religious meetings, as was the case at Portsmouth, where the people lived near together. One exception, however, should be noticed,—that of the Sabbath School where our youth here are on that holy day regularly gathered in the House of God from all parts of the Parish.

But to preach the gospel in public and in private I still found to be a great work and one that required constant preparation; for, what Paul said to Timothy on another occasion is seasonable to every minister now. “Till I come, said the apostle, give thy attendance to reading, to meditation and to doctrine.” Hence I felt it my duty to study the Holy Word, that I might learn what messages I should, from time to time, bring thence to the hearing of my people.

I trust that none of you, my hearers, who have been under my ministry any considerable time, are ignorant of my views of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Religion. They are the same they were when I began to preach fifty years ago. They are called *Evangelical* or *Calvanistic*. I have already spoken of them particularly in the early part of this discourse. I think they are all briefly embraced under these two general views of christian truth, viz. The regeneration and sanctification of the sinful heart of man by the power of the Holy Spirit and the atonement for sin through the death of Christ to be received by a penitent and believing mind. Such has been the substance of my *doctrinal* preaching all the thirty years of my ministry here as well as the twenty of my first pastorate.

As to my views and teachings and services respecting *experimental* and *practical* Religion, I would say, that I have endeavored to sympathize with real christians in the various exercises of their minds, respecting the great conflict they have with sin and Satan, while by the Spirit of God the work of Sanctification is advancing in their hearts. I have at the same time inculcated on them and on every class of my people the duty of living a blameless and holy life.

I have preached to sinners, who have never given their hearts to God and embraced the free offers of salvation, the duty of immediate repentance and immediate faith in Christ Jesus as the only Savior.

At the same time, I think, you will all bear me witness, that I have taught you, that no exhibition of divine truth, nor any belief of it will ever convert a sinner. Hence I have argued the duty of christians to pray for the Spirit to accompany the means of grace and also to pray specially and particularly for what is called a *Revival of Religion*. Not that sinners *may not be converted and often are converted* by the Spirit of God where there is no Revival; but inasmuch as there are in all our Congregations great numbers of unconverted persons, who are in danger of dying in their sins, it is the duty of christians to pray earnestly, perseveringly and with faith for the out pouring of the Spirit and for our thus *realizing* all the gracious and glorious effects of a Revival of *that Religion*, which is *pure and undefiled*.

You know, my friends, that such reviving seasons God has graciously and repeatedly given us during these thirty years. The *first*



visitation of this merciful kind was in the year 1840, when 23 were gathered into the church, as its fruits; the *second* was in 1841,—whose fruits were 26; the *third* in 1853,—additions to the church, 14; the 4th in 1858, and 16 realized as its fruits; the 5th and last in 1863, when 9 came forward and professed their Savior's name. None of these reviving times were of such power as is sometimes realized, where a 50, or 75, or 100 converts are counted. But all these seasons with us have been refreshing to our hearts and have taught us what gifts of grace God has to bestow *in answer to prayer*.

I think the revival of 1840, was the one that most deeply affected the church and the people. I remember well, that some of our afternoon meetings, one in this House for prayer and another at the vestry for enquirers *held at the same time*,—were largely attended. Even in the busy season of the summer, some of our people would leave their hay-fields to be present in the *one* place for prayer or in the *other* for inquiring “what they must do to be saved?”

But when the Holy Spirit withholds his gracious influences how different—how lifeless our condition! Do you not remember, those cold and barren years of 1847, '48 and '49, when not a single one of all our people came forward to tell ‘what the Lord had done for his soul?’ and also a like withholding of the Spirit's influence in some other years, when scarcely any one was asking with deep concern ‘what he must do to be saved?’ Ah! my christian friends, who of us were guilty of grieving the Spirit of our God in those years? your pastor, or yourselves, or all of us together? Deep humiliation becomes us for such coldness and barrenness! May all the future years of this church be years of christian faith and labor and prayer,—so that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost may be glorified in the salvation of all this beloved people.

With regard to *church membership* during my ministry here, I would say that, as nearly as I can ascertain, the number at the time of my settlement was 208, that number annually increased till in 1842 it was 262. There was then a gradual decrease till in 1847 the number was 244. That was the year when the Central church was formed, and for which important enterprise we felt providentially called upon to give up a large number of our christian brethren and sisters. This brought our number down to 200.

We felt that the formation of the New Church was loudly called for. The Central village was rapidly increasing in population and general prosperity : and church members and families of the Congregational order could not be expected to continue their attendance here. On this account we cheerfully met the self denying duty of parting with those we loved,—brethren and sisters in the Lord, and families, ‘with whom we had taken sweet council and with whom we had long walked to the House of God.’ All this we did though we plainly foresaw, that it would *temporarily at least* decrease our own number and our own strength : for as the village should grow it would operate as a draft on the population of the Old Parish. This has been realized. But, *what we have lost they have gained.* So let it be ; for God is still the owner of us all. It is good to be in his hand and entirely at his disposal.

God has smiled upon this enterprise of the establishment of a church of our order in that place. They have been blessed with a succession of faithful ministers of Christ Jesus our Lord. Their number of church members and of attendants on public worship has been constantly increasing ; and we trust that our Savior *has been and will be* honored by the preaching of his blessed gospel to the increasing population of that village. I would also here add, that it is a source of christian enjoyment to us to learn from time to time that our Congregational church there is living in christian harmony with the other church near them and of a different denomination.

Although the present number of our church members and of the families of our people is smaller than it was several years ago, I think, my friends, we need not view this as, *on the whole*, a discouraging consideration. For while as I have just said, the growth of the Central village does and will attract some from our own territory, there is yet remaining within its limits a population numerous enough and powerful enough to fill this large House of God to overflowing. Only let the members of our church awake to that measure of prayer and self-denial and zeal, which their vows and the Savior’s honor call for,—and the Holy Spirit would arouse the hundreds of families within our limits so that they would come forth to the worship and service of God, not only filling this Holy Temple with humble and devout hearers, but also giving a strength to the Congregation, to the church, to the

ministry and to the cause of the Savior *hitherto unknown*. Such a time, I trust will come,—especially under the ministry of those, who shall follow him. whose time of service here will soon expire. Why,—my hearers, there is a considerable number of families within the large territory of this Parish, that attend the public worship of God *nowhere*, and some families there are, now represented by a single individual only, in this House of God. While these facts read to us all a lesson on the duty of laboring to bring into the fold of Christ all such wandering sheep, I think they show us also the resources there are here for filling up the places of those, who in late years have found it more convenient to worship by themselves, while they remain of our own Denomination and on the terms of christian brotherhood with us.

In coming now to a more statistical view of the fifty years of my ministry I feel more and more the difficulties of its having been a *broken* ministry; i. e. of my having labored twenty years in one place and thirty in another. In speaking of the *character of my preaching* and of my *pastoral labors* as I have already done, this difficulty has been experienced but little; for my preaching and my other services have been substantially the same in both places. But it is different in what I have now to say of the local occurrences and practical results of my whole ministry. I have not the means of being so particular in this respect concerning my first pastorate as concerning my present one. But I will give you, my hearers, as full a statement as practicable respecting each of them. And yet I wish it to be considered that I dwelt largely on these things in my Farewell Discourse at Portsmouth and in my Century, and Half, and Quarter Century Discourses here.

I will first notice the Subject of *Admissions* to the two churches under my ministry. The number admitted while I was in Portsmouth, was 301, making an annual number of about 15. The number admitted here is 204,—an annual average of 7. The total admissions during my whole ministry is 505.

In connection with *admissions* to the church it is natural to look at *Removals*. In this respect I can speak only of our church here. The number of deaths with us has been 135; The number of *dismissions* to other churches including the 35 we gave up to establish the colony church is 57, making the whole number of *removals* 191. Our church

here was organized Dec. 26, 1794, O. S. 170 years ago; and the whole number ever admitted is 1136. The present number is 155.

I will take occasion here to remark on one work, which has been accomplished during my ministry and which, I think, will be of lasting service to the church and the cause of religion here: I refer to the Church Book, which was prepared and published some years since by a Committee of the church, on which I was appointed with brothers Zechariah Eddy and Alfred Wood. Brother Eddy wrote a long and interesting history of the church, and brother Wood devoted much time and labor on a valuable biographical catalogue of the members: and here I would add, that, at the request of the church, I have during all my ministry acted as their scribe and shall leave a Book of Records for thirty years, which I trust will be useful to the future generations of the church and the people of the Parish.

The number of Baptisms, which I administered in Portsmouth is 322; the number here 158; total 480.

I officiated at 413 *funerals* in Portsmouth and at 859 since I have been in Middleboro. The whole number of Funerals of my fellow mortals at which I have officiated is 1272. The actual number of funerals here among my own people is only 736, which shows, that I have attended 123 funerals in families not belonging to the Parish.

The number of Marriages at which I have officiated is as follows,—183 in Portsmouth, and 414 here; 597 in all.

Our church here with their pastor have during my ministry attended 90 *Ecclesiastical Councils*. This number will seem large, but no doubt our Church have often been invited upon such Councils on account of the knowledge and experience of our late Brother, Zechariah Eddy, and of the advice which he was able to give on such occasions. He was therefore often appointed as our Delegate.

On the occasions of Ordination and Installation, I have several times been requested to preach the Discourse. I have performed the same service repeatedly at Dedications.

In my ministerial intercourse with other Denominations, I am happy in being able to say, that I have been on Fraternal terms with such of them as are considered Evangelical. I have freely exchanged pulpit services with our Baptist and Methodist Brethren; and Episcopal Brethren have often preached in my pulpit.



I have also had great christian enjoyment and improvement at the free social and religious meetings of our Ministerial Associations and Conferences of Churches.

Obligations of an interesting character am I under, to the people of my charge here, for their repeated contributions to make me a Life Member of some of the great Charitable and Religious Societies of the Country. A like expression of ministerial regard was shown me by the people of my first Pastorate, who gave me a Life Membership in ten of these Societies.

In one important respect my ministry here resembles the one at Portsmouth. It has been a *peaceful* ministry in both places; no strifes nor divisions either here or there. I have sometimes attributed the lengthening out of my unworthy life to the enjoyment of that peace, which I have always had in the churches and in the Parishes, with which I have spent these fifty years. I am a lover of peace myself; I have long been a member of the American Peace Society. My business has been all this time to preach "the Gospel of peace;" and I humbly hope I know something of the peace there is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I would here say with regard to pastoral visitation among the families of my two respective charges, that it has been my design to call upon them all once a year, though I may sometimes have failed of doing so. But when they have been in any kind of affliction my visits have been correspondently frequent. Have you ever reflected, my hearers, how many pastoral visits one would make in fifty years on the supposition, that it should be only a single one every day? The number is surprisingly great, being over 18,000:—and probably there are few ministers, who do not visit far more frequently than this.

Let me ask you in this connection, my friends, to reflect a little how often in thirty years you could have heard the gospel preached in this House by your pastor or by some one, with whom he may have exchanged Sabbath labors? Here again the result will probably surprise you; for in thirty years there are over 1500 Sabbaths. This ordinarily gives a congregation an opportunity of hearing some views of the glorious gospel more than 3000 times in the period I have named. This view of the subject is *deeply* affecting, if not *equally* so, to a minister and his people. It shows us how solemn is the ac-

count we shall all have to give of our labors or of our privileges : and I think there is one view of the subject, which is calculated deeply to affect us all,—pastor and people ; this is the patience and forbearance of God towards us in view of our failure of preaching as we ought or of hearing as we ought.

You see, my friends, how difficult it is for me to arrange and present all the various local topics, which offer themselves for consideration on this Anniversary. As I have already said, it would be comparatively easy for me to speak to you this day had I been settled here in March 15, 1815 and continued as your pastor till this time.

Let me now remark upon the temporal support, which as a pastor I have had from the two parishes respectively during my labors among them ; and I am happy to say, that they have met their engagements with a good degree of punctuality,—so that I have received from them all that has been necessary for my personal and my family expenses. Beside the income from my stated salary, I have received in my first twenty and in my last thirty years, numerous expressions of generosity from individuals, which have laid me under lasting and grateful obligations. My family also have had liberal Donation Visits : in a word our wants have been well supplied.

Nor would I forget here to say, that both in Portsmouth and in Middleborough we have had delightful Parsonage Houses to dwell in, which our people have kept in comfortable order from year to year, verily may we say that, in these respects our cup of earthly enjoyment has been “running over.” Not but what we have had our share of the common afflictions of life,—seasons of sickness, times of bereavement and other trials incident to our mortal state ; but, after all, we can join with our people, saying, in the language of the Holy word, “The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all His works.”

The remarks which I have just made respecting the attention, which my people have paid to the parsonage ought to be extended to our Beloved Sanctuary here. These seasonable attentions to the House of God your Pastor and all who revere the worship of the everlasting Jehovah, will duly appreciate in future days and future years. This Temple of the Lord has always been the admiration of strangers when they have passed it. Such, my friends, let it be for generations to

come. Keep your eyes upon its internal and external appearances. Look upon all its *surroundings*. Let there be no marks of decay, no signs of inattention to these earthly things, for they all point up to that glorious Temple on high, where the Lord God forever dwells and where your Pastor prays and has long prayed, that you may all have a dwelling place throughout Eternal Ages.

Let me here make one suggestion respecting a greater facility for the future pastors in conducting their various religious services; It relates to the building of what may be called a Conference Room connected with this House of God. Such a Room is now not uncommon in our churches and needed no where more than with us here. I would not now dwell particularly upon it any further than to say that while I have for years felt the need of such a help in my ministry here, I have made and preserved a memorandum of more than twelve special uses by which it might promote the spiritual welfare of this church and people. At some future time I may say more on this subject.

But, my beloved friends, I am admonished that I must soon close. I feel that I have already seriously taxed your patience.

But you see we have had to go over a great deal of ground. It is not a short or an easy work to review a fifty years of Mortal Life; much less so, if those years have been spent in so responsible a service as that of a christian minister. No one of us can, with all our intellectual powers or even with the added help of christian faith, reach the remote and everlasting consequences of preaching the word of God *even for a single time*. Oh! then, who can tell what those consequences may be, which results from a twenty, or thirty, or fifty years of such service!

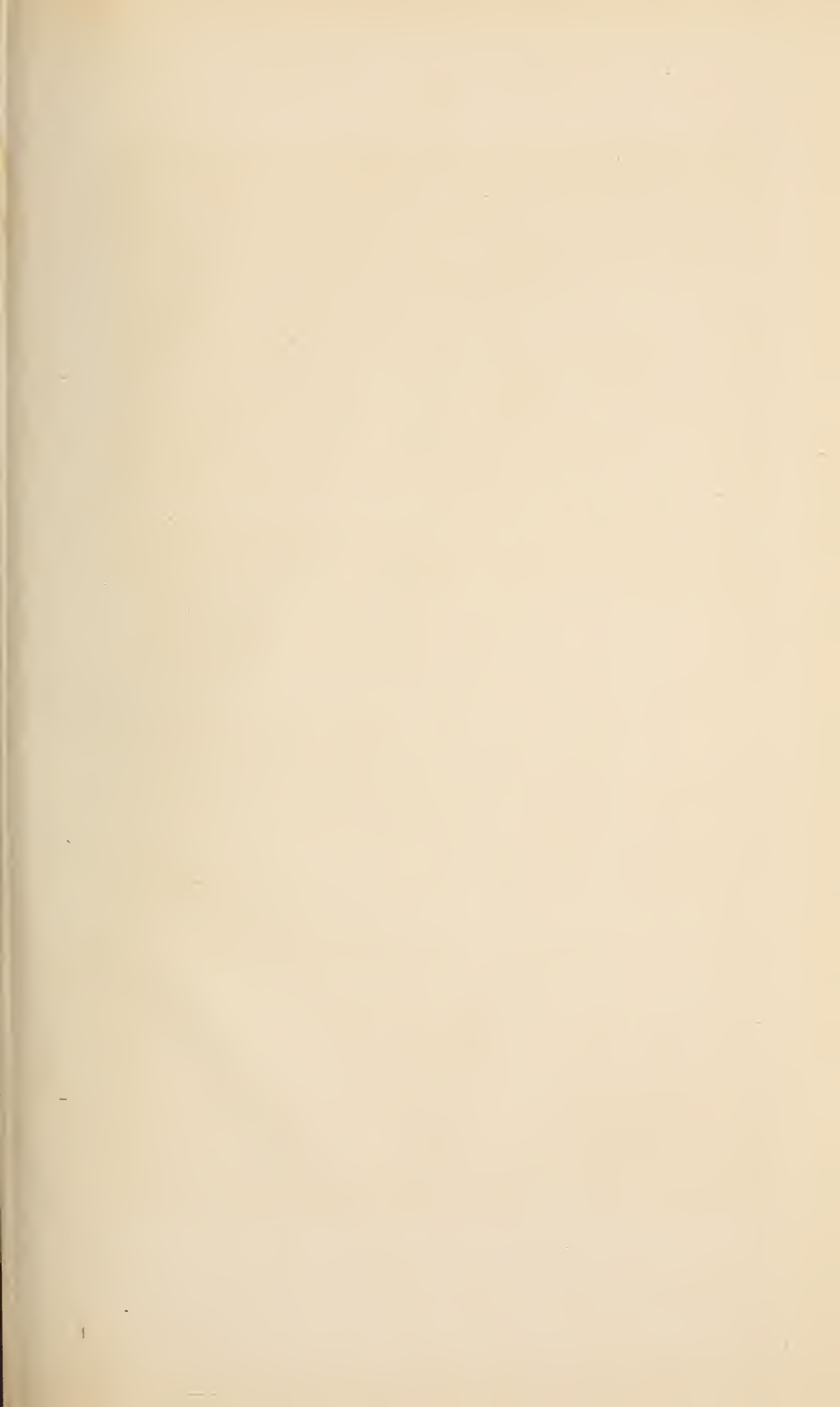
Let me now tender to you all my sincere thanks for the patience, with which you have heard me on this day and in any part of the thirty years, during which I have preached the everlasting gospel in this place. I am not going to bid you farewell to-day; but I am admonished, that *the 28th of October* is drawing nigh. That will be, if I am allowed to see it, on many accounts the most affecting anniversary of my Life. If God shall spare me another seven months, then my *stated labors* as a minister of the Lord Jesus will close. Shall I then find you all living to hear my last words? God only. I know, can answer that solemn question.

But my friends, consider for a moment, what events of a Religious kind may transpire with us here in those short seven months. There will be in that time three Sacramental Communion of our church. Are there not some of you, now cherishing a humble hope in Christ, who will confess him publicly before my time shall expire? And may not the work of God be revived here before my final Farewell, so that I may then see *many*—yea, even *all* of my beloved people safe in the kingdom of Christ, with the glorious hope that we shall all meet at His right hand in the great and final day?

My christian friends, I know you wish for such a close of your pastor's work. Remember, then, that God is the hearer of Prayer, that Christ is the Savior of sinners and that the Holy Spirit is the great agent in their conversion and salvation.

Go, then, bearing these three thoughts on your minds; and rejoice that you are invited to labor in the cause, for which our common Savior gave his life upon the cross. Amen.









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